

at Ohio State University. His lifetime of service at EPA began in 1971. Most recently, on February 17, 1997, Mr. Fields was appointed Acting Assistant Administrator for the Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response (OSWER). Prior to this, Mr. Fields served for three years as Principal Deputy Administrator for OSWER where he was responsible for Superfund and solid waste under RCRA, Director of EPA's Superfund office for over two years and serving in that office for five years, and Director of EPA's Emergency Response Division for four and a half years and Deputy Director of the Hazardous Site Control Division for a year and a half.

Even more remarkable is his list of achievements. He received the highest award for civil servants, the Presidential Rank Award for Distinguished Executive Service—not once but four times. He was recommended twice under President George Bush and twice under President Bill Clinton. He is the only EPA employee to be so honored.

According to a report issued by the General Accounting Office, by the end of this fiscal year, all cleanup remedies will have been selected for over 1,100 sites. About 31,000 sites have been removed from the Superfund inventory of potential waste sites to help promote the economic redevelopment of these priorities. I think it is fair to say that Mr. Fields deserves part of the credit.

Mr. Fields' career at EPA is one of great distinction and is a model for Virginians interested in a life in public service. I am very proud to offer my support for Mr. Fields.

THANKS TO THE MAJORITY LEADER

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I thank the distinguished Republican leader for his willingness to have a session on tomorrow in order that I and other Senators might make speeches which we have not had an opportunity to give during the previous busy days of this week. But I thought it better, if it could be done, that we complete our speeches today and not cause the Senate to have to be in session on tomorrow.

I did want to thank the majority leader for his willingness to have the Senate come in.

Mr. President, I thank those who have stayed to listen, and may God bless all the Members of this body and all the staff people who work to help us to serve our constituents. May he continue to bless this great country, and may we as Americans never forget that this country has been a favorite in God's masterful design. God bless America.

I yield the floor.

ACCESS TO NETWORK STATIONS VIA SATELLITE TELEVISION

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I rise to urge a speedy resolution to the con-

ference the House- and Senate-passed versions of H.R. 1554, the Satellite Home Viewer Improvement Act. I hope that the conferees will meet soon, and that the Congress can take final action on this matter.

This is a much needed measure to enhance the satellite television industry's ability to compete with cable television. Currently, cable has a commanding 85 percent share of the multichannel video programming distribution market. Satellite serves only 12.1 percent of the market. The 1988 Satellite Home Viewer Act enacted in 1988 put in place certain impediments to satellite carriers being truly competitive with cable. This measure alleviates those roadblocks and will promote real competition. This is good news for consumers. Prices should come down, and the diversity of programming offered should increase.

The Senate version of H.R. 1554 would remove the 90-day waiting period for receipt of broadcast network signals that consumers currently face when switching from cable to satellite television reception. It would authorize satellite carriers to offer local television station broadcasts to their customers. This provision would go a long way toward leveling the playing field between cable and satellite television. One of the major deterrents to purchasing satellite television has been the inability to watch local broadcast programming. The bill also contains a "must carry" provision, meaning that all local stations must be carried by the satellite carriers by January 1, 2002.

But, Mr. President, the aspect of this legislation that my constituents are most immediately concerned about is their current access to distant network signals through their satellite television systems. As I drive through the mountains of West Virginia, I am awed by their beauty and majesty. West Virginia truly is an amazing state in which to live, sometimes described as "all ups and downs." Flattened out as you would a crumpled piece of paper, a topographic map of West Virginia would move up the ranks from one of the smaller states in the Union to one of the largest. This awe-inspiring geography presents unique challenges to my constituents. One of those challenges is the ability to receive over-the-air broadcast signals. Many of my constituents, through no fault of their own, are having those signals terminated. While they may live in an area that is supposed to get a signal from the local broadcast station, many times geography and other factors result in a picture that is not acceptable. Under current law, if a household should be able to receive broadcast network signals with an antenna, that household is ineligible to receive distant network signals from their satellite provider. This leaves many West Virginians with little recourse. Their street address or zip code indicates that they should be able to receive

local stations with a rooftop antenna, but the steep hillsides that form their backyards make that impossible.

In an effort to address this issue, under the Senate-passed version of H.R. 1554, customers who were receiving a distant network signal before July 11, 1998, would receive those signals until December 31, 1999. After that date, the affiliate network signals of customers residing within the Grade A contours, the areas closest to the broadcast station, would be cut off. This bill will allow satellite subscribers outside of the grade A contour, but within the grade B contour, to continue to receive their distant network signals after December 31, 1999, subject to an FCC rulemaking. I believe this is a fair way to deal with subscribers who, through no fault of their own, would otherwise have distant network signals terminated.

I am a strong supporter of local broadcasters, and I believe that they perform an important function for local communities. The local news and emergency services broadcasters provide are invaluable and should be protected. While I understand the concerns expressed by local broadcasters, I am not convinced that the grandfathering provision included in the Senate bill will constitute significant harm to their livelihoods.

I urge the conferees to complete action so that Congress can quickly enact this legislation to provide relief to the many people throughout West Virginia and the Nation.

I apologize to all officers, Senators's aides and Members of the staff for the late hour, but I think that is perhaps better than being in session tomorrow.

INDEPENDENCE DAY

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I take this time to call the attention of our colleagues and our viewing audience to the forthcoming Independence Day, July 4.

What is July 4 all about? The Declaration of Independence in U.S. history was a document that proclaimed the freedom of the Thirteen Colonies from British rule. It was the first formal pronouncement by an organized body of people of the right to govern by choice.

On July 2, 1776, the Second Continental Congress, meeting in Philadelphia, approved Richard Henry Lee's motion for independence, and on July 4—which later came to be celebrated as Independence Day—it approved the declaration. Signing of the declaration took place over the course of several months, beginning August 2. Ultimately, the signatories numbered 56.

The Declaration of Independence, written primarily by Thomas Jefferson, and modeled largely on the theories of John Locke, have affirmed the national rights of man and the doctrine of government by contract, which Congress insisted had been repeatedly violated by King George III.